



The Great Rhythmobile Adventure

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



4

HISTORY TELLS THE STORY

History tells the story...
Rhythm is a part of life!



6

THE DISCONCERTING MAESTRO EXPLAINS Electroacoustic Music



8

THE STORY OF THE CONCERT



9

INSTRUMENTS YOU WILL HEAR



12

SOLFA TEACHES US

Rhythm on the page—there's nothing
complicated about it!



14

CELEBRITIES À LA CARTE

15

LET'S HAVE SOME FUN

Snakes and Ladders!
What's different?

17

EVEN MORE FUN

A musical rally race with your friends!



19

TO YOUR INSTRUMENTS! READY? SET... PLAY



21

GET READY FOR THE CONCERT



22

EXPAND YOUR MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE SOLUTIONS

The Great Rhythmobile Adventure at Jeunesses Musicales of Canada

For over 60 years now, Jeunesses Musicales of Canada (JMC) has dedicated itself to promoting classical music to young Canadians and their families. With its 17 productions, JMC presents over 500 concerts each year in schools and performance halls, from coast to coast.

This is the study guide that accompanies *The Great Rhythmobile Adventure* concert. The document is intended for elementary school students and their teachers. It can be used to prepare the students to attend the concert, as well as to look back on the event, and to further teaching started prior to the show.

Enjoy the concert!

The Great Rhythmobile Adventure

ARTISTS:

Bruno Roy and Thierry Arsenault, percussion

CONCEPT AND STAGE DIRECTION:

Michel G. Barette

COSTUMES AND PROPS:

Maryse Messier

MUSICAL PROPS:

Thierry Arsenault

THE PERFORMERS ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS

WHEN DID YOU START TO STUDY MUSIC?

Thierry: At the age of 12

Bruno: At 11 years of age

WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE COMPOSER?

Thierry: Prokofiev, Piazzolla, and Peter Gabriel

Bruno: Stevie Wonder

NAME A FILM THAT YOU ARE ESPECIALLY FOND OF:

Thierry: *La Belle Verte* (Coline Serreau)

Bruno: *The Shawshank Redemption* (Frank Darabont)

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?

Thierry: All of Stefan Zweig's biographies. *Essays* by Montaigne. *Pensées* by Pascal. *The Birth of Tragedy* by Nietzsche.

Bruno: The books of the *Inheritance Cycle* by Christopher Paolini.

NAME A RECORD THAT YOU CAN LISTEN TO OVER

AND OVER AGAIN:

Thierry: *Passion* by Peter Gabriel.

Bruno: *Songs in the Key of Life* by Stevie Wonder, and *Appaloosa* by Gino Vannelli

DO YOU HAVE A HOBBY THAT YOU'RE

PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Thierry: Cabinet-making

Bruno: Reading and movies

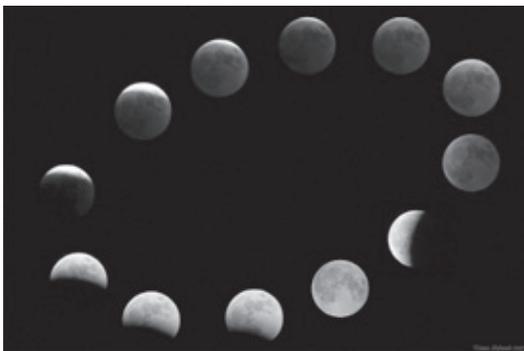


→ HISTORY TELLS THE STORY... RHYTHM IS A PART OF LIFE!

**RHYTHM HAS BEEN A PART OF LIFE
SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME...**



By closely observing nature, humans gradually discovered a wide range of repetitive phenomena taking place around them—some of which appeared very simple, like the rising sun announcing the beginning of each new day, and others that were more complex, like the various phases of the moon in the starry sky.



BUT WHAT EXACTLY IS RHYTHM?

**RHYTHM CAN BE DESCRIBED AS THE REPETITION
OF A SOUND OR A STRUCTURE IN TIME.**

For example, we can feel the power of rhythm when we listen to the succession of sounds produced by a troupe of tap dancers on stage. A crowd of spectators all clapping their hands at the same time to encourage a hockey team also creates a compelling rhythm.



Rhythm, as our ancestors noticed, also marks and defines many elements of nature. Rhythm can be seen and heard. It is present in the calming sound of drops of rain falling onto the surface of a pond, the steady sound of waves at the seashore, the sound of a horse trotting in a meadow.

Finally, rhythm is present in several man-made structures, like calendars and clocks. These inventions have allowed us to coordinate social activities and organize the passage of time. The sound of your school bell at an exact time every Friday allows you to celebrate the start of the weekend! On your calendar, you can mark your birthday each year, as well as those of your parents and friends. With every spring season, you can enjoy some tasty maple taffy when the maple sap starts to flow... It's fun to see how rhythm helps us experience and re-experience so many good moments over time!



Rhythm is in you!
Can you feel your heart beat or hear the steady flow of your breathing?



→ PERCUSSION DOWN THROUGH THE AGES

Early humans sought to reproduce the rhythms they heard. They first tried using their hands, their voices, and their bodies. Then, they discovered that it was possible to reproduce these rhythms by banging or rubbing together objects like stones, branches, bones, and shells. The first percussion instruments were born.

Over time, percussion instruments developed several roles other than a musical one, slowly becoming part of many other aspects of human activity.

RELIGION

Most of the world's peoples have, at one time or another in their history, used percussion in a religious context. In fact, one of the uses of percussion was to invoke gods and spirits. For example, Inuit fishermen and hunters used a drum—the qilaut—to ask the gods to protect them from the dangers of their tasks. Today, some cultures still use percussion in this way.



SOCIAL LIFE

In several populations around the world, village life is organized around rituals made up of songs and dances. These gatherings are a very important part of social life, and percussion is used to provide rhythm at these events.



COMMUNICATION

On the African continent, the slit drum was used to send messages from one village to another. Long before the invention of the telephone and email, this type of drum allowed people to communicate with one another.

TRANSPORTATION

At a time when motorized boats didn't exist, strong oarsmen moved along ships and galleys. On board, the sound of a drum provided a rhythm for their work, allowing them to row at the same time.

TODAY...

Percussion has become an essential element of our music. Without it, jazz, pop, Latin, country, hip-hop, and rock music just wouldn't be the same!



→ ELECTROACOUSTIC MUSIC

WHEN MUSIC AND ELECTRICITY MAKE GOOD BEDFELLOWS!

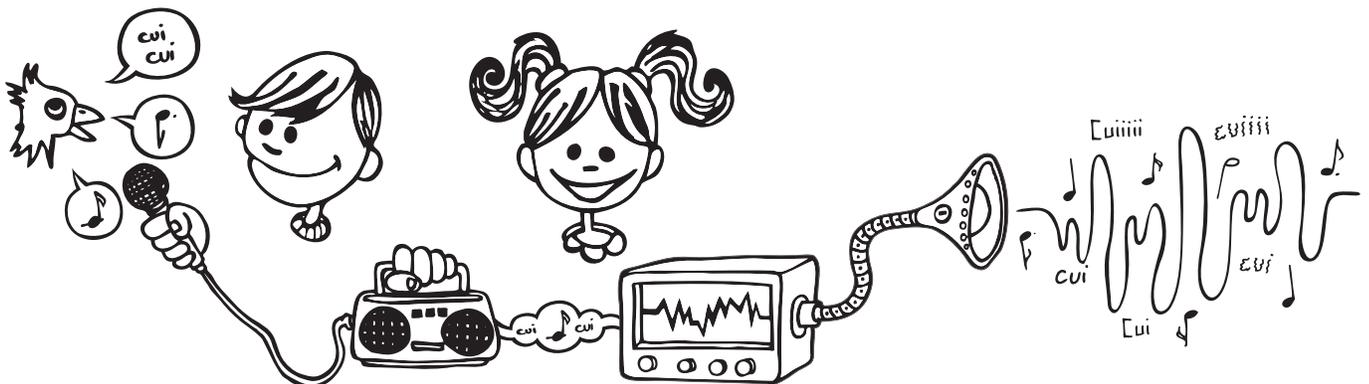


Electricity revolutionized our world. It gave all manner of inventions the energy they require to function. Television, computers, sound systems, household appliances, lamps, and dryers—all of these things need electricity to work. Even our home heating often comes from this great source of energy!

It therefore comes as no surprise to learn that electricity has also found a special place in the music world. Indeed, beginning in the late 1940s, electricity and electronics allowed creative artists to explore new horizons in sound. By using electronic methods to create, record, modify, or transmit sounds, several composers and musicians in the second half of the 20th century gave rise to an all new artistic movement: **electroacoustic music**.

Some artists first explored the possibility of recording the sounds around them (a squeaking door, the sound of a saw, birdsong...) to then modify them or repeat them using various technological processes. In doing so, they created works using, superimposing, or otherwise playing with all the modified sounds.

Other musicians worked towards creating new sounds using only electronic processes. These had no counterparts in existing sounds; instead, they were produced completely through electronic means.





ELECTRICITY AND ELECTRONICS... THE SOURCE AND THE LANGUAGE!

Electricity is a very valuable source of energy. This is made clear by the important role it plays in our lives... It runs a great number of devices, and can even be transformed into other types of energy, like light and heat.



Electronics is a science that, in a way, allows us to structure and interpret the signals coming from electricity. For example, thanks to electronics, you can control the various functions on a radio, such as raising the volume or changing the station... Electronics send precise signals based on the user's gestures or commands. Electronics can be called the language of electricity—it's how messages are transmitted from the energy source to the devices that surround us.

Today... electroacoustic music is all around us! If you listen closely, you will surely hear it:

- On the radio
- In video games
- When a cell phone rings
- Through your mp3 player or CD player
- On the soundtracks to many shows and films



Electro-what music?

The word electroacoustic contains the words **electro** reminding us of the importance of electricity and electronics and **acoustic** referring to the world of sound.

Therefore, electroacoustic music is the art of exploring the world of sound using various electronic tools, such as computers, sound systems, and speakers.



The Great Rhythmobile Adventure

THE RHYTHMOBILE—A SUPER-POWERED, ALL-TERRAIN, HYBRID VEHICLE—HAS UNFORTUNATELY RUN OUT OF GAS. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTINUE THE RACE WITHOUT FILLING UP FIRST. BUT WHAT EXACTLY SHOULD THE TANK BE FILLED WITH?

**THE SEARCH
FOR THE LOST RHYTHM!**

Captain Kit Crash, the Rhythmobile's clumsy driver, and his loyal mechanic, Whiplash, pull over to the side of the road in an area that doesn't even show up on their rally maps. They boldly attempt to start up their super-powered car that only runs on rhythm! Who knows if this type of fuel can be found here in this unknown land? With the help of various objects they find along the way, they slowly manage to fill the tank... but the clock is ticking, and they'll need to hurry!

Our two adventurers find themselves in a crazy race against time! They need to find their precious fuel—rhythm—in order to continue their expedition.



INSTRUMENTS YOU WILL HEAR



Note: Since the musicians explore a world of instruments and rhythms over the entire course of their expedition, it is preferable to present this section of the stuffy guide **after the concert** in order to preserve the element of surprise.

→ HERE ARE A FEW OF THE INSTRUMENTS THAT YOU HEARD DURING THE CONCERT...

THE CAJÓN



This simple wooden box holds several rich and shimmering sounds that sound astonishingly similar to the sounds of... a drum! This is due to the fact that the cajón generally contains a set of drum snares inside its box (some cajóns contain guitar strings or little bells). On the back of the instrument is a hole about 10 cm in diameter, which permits the sound to escape.

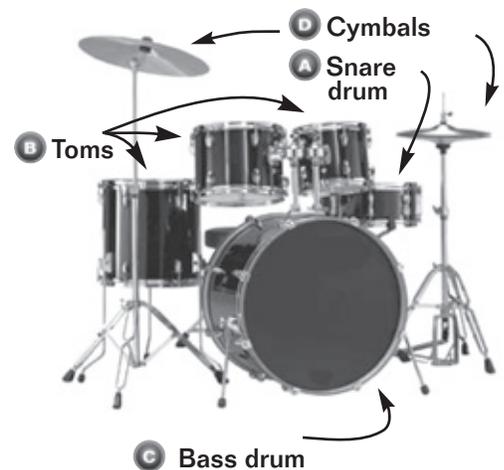
The musician sits on the cajón and strikes the surface with both hands in an alternating fashion. If the percussionist hits the edges of the body, it produces a higher sound. Striking the instrument near the centre produces a lower sound. The percussionist can also hit softer or harder, thereby creating a wide range of subtleties. Using just the fingertips or the entire palm of your hand, an incredible array of sounds can be produced with this instrument.

The word cajón means “case” or “drawer,” and refers to the crates workers used to use to carry fruits or fish. The cajón first appeared in Peru, and was initially used to support or enhance the rhythm of the country’s local songs and dances. Today, the cajón is a percussion instrument that has slowly found a place for itself in most musical styles.

ACOUSTIC OR TRADITIONAL DRUM KIT

A drum kit is a set of drums, toms, and cymbals that allow the instrumentalist to produce an impressively wide range of sounds and rhythms. It is an instrument with a very wide reach, and is found around the entire world!

Can you identify the various parts of the instrument?





LET'S LOOK AT THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE DRUM KIT IN DETAIL

A THE SNARE DRUM

The snare drum has a very prestigious history. This portable type of drum was used by, among others, soldiers on the battlefield. The snare drum was used to give precise signals, or to direct a regiment's movements.

VARIOUS PARTS OF THE SNARE DRUM:



The snare drum has two drum skins:

- 1 The batter head (or top head):**
the skin that is struck with drumsticks or small brushes.
- 2 The snare head (or bottom head):**
the skin on the bottom of the instrument. **3** It gives the instrument its sound and provides it with its distinct characteristics.
- 4 The shell:**
the body of the instrument. The two skins are attached to it using tension rod mechanisms.
- 5 The strainer:**
a mechanism that controls the tension of the snare on the bottom head, thereby changing the colour of the sound.

Notice that the other drums in the drum kit generally have shapes that resemble that of the snare drum. What is most different about each of them is their size. This range of sizes allows us to produce higher-pitched sounds (snare drum) or deeper sounds (bass drum).

B THE TOMS

Like many other percussion instruments, the toms also have a long and rich history. Originally, they were mostly found in China and India. Today, various types of toms are used, both in drum kits and in brass bands, not to mention in orchestras.

A drum kit will generally include two to four toms of different sizes.

C THE BASS DRUM

As you might imagine, the bass drum is a large-size drum that is set perpendicular to the floor and is struck using a foot-activated pedal.

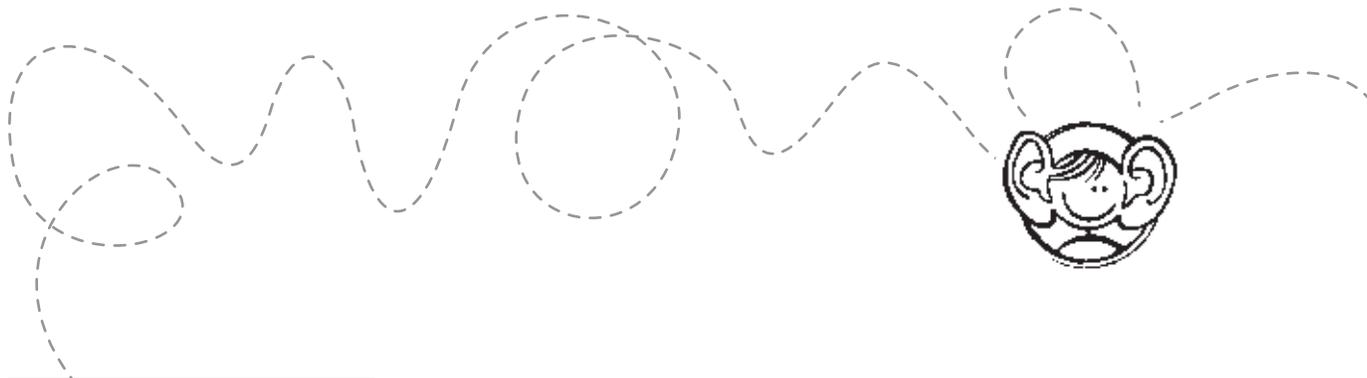


Do you know the bass drum can also be played in a marching band?

D THE CYMBALS

The acoustic drum kit also generally includes two types of cymbals, suspended cymbals and pedal-activated hi-hat cymbals. They are made of metal and their shimmering sound is most certainly a welcome addition to the sounds produced by the drum kit.





**AN ELECTRONIC DRUM KIT,
COMPLETELY ELECTRIFYING!**

An electronic drum kit can sometimes resemble an acoustic drum kit ...



And sometimes, it doesn't!



The electronic drum kit uses **pads**, which are rubber or foam plates, either round or square, that are struck to produce sounds.



A **converter** transforms the strikes captured by the pads into signals that can be understood by a computer or special unit.

The electronic drum kit is a very recent instrument in the history of music. It first appeared only 40 years ago! Today, it sometimes replaces a traditional drum kit or can be used to complete or enhance a percussion section by imitating a phenomenal range of sounds.

A **unit** containing a great quantity of sampled sounds and noises allows the percussionist to choose, modify, superimpose, or repeat a sound in an infinite number of ways with just one strike of the pad.

Many indispensable accessories—from pedals to electric cables—connect the pads to the converter, and drumsticks complete the kit!



→ THE DOWNBEAT... AN IMPORTANT REFERENCE POINT!

In each bar, there is a **downbeat**, or a beat that is stressed, and one or more unstressed beats. The downbeat is the first beat of each bar. It marks out the beginning of each new bar and is an important reference point for musicians playing together in a group.

A 4/4 RHYTHM THEREFORE,

IS MADE UP OF 1 STRESSED BEAT (DOWNBEAT)

AND 3 UNSTRESSED BEATS:

1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 ...
< . . . | <

IN A 3/4 RHYTHM,

1 STRESSED BEAT (DOWNBEAT) IS FOLLOWED

BY 2 UNSTRESSED BEATS.

This is a very danceable rhythm.
In fact, the 3/4 rhythm is what you may know as a waltz:

1 2 3 | 1 2 3 ...
< . . | <

Count to four while clapping your hands and try to stress the first clap (the first beat). Keep doing it without speeding up or slowing down the rhythm of your clapping. You can count out loud if it helps. Then, try it again with a 3 beat bar.

In western music, the notion of rhythm has greatly changed over time. The oldest music scores ever found generally have very few indications of rhythm or none at all. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, people began to make note of the rhythm of musical phrases to enable musicians to perform the pieces more accurately. However, rhythm and melody was not combined on paper until the arrival and refinement of the musical staff.





→ CUT THEM OUT AND COLLECT THEM ALL!



STOMP

Through performances and audiovisual recordings, these groups of musicians/dancers explore and showcase the rhythm hiding all around us. Using “everyday” objects like brooms or trashcans, Stomp’s musicians manage to create amazing expressions of rhythm and astonishing musical and visual works.



GUY NADON

He’s been nicknamed the “king of the drums!” Guy Nadon is a living legend who has been exploring and enriching the world of rhythm and sound for over sixty years. An important figure on the Quebec jazz scene, he uses everything he can get his hands on, from Campbell’s soup cans to a traditional drum kit!



RUBEM DANTAS

Rubem Dantas is a percussionist from Brazil who has worked with several of the great musicians of his time, including Paco De Lucia and Chick Corea. Talented and creative, Dantas introduced the cajón into the flamenco music repertoire, thereby further enriching this already very flamboyant genre of music.



DAVID VAN TIEGHEM

David Van Tieghem is a very versatile American artist who is at once a composer, percussionist, and actor. He enjoys exploring the spaces that surround him, searching for the strangest and most diverse sounds he can find. He has composed music for several films and theatrical productions. His many collaborations show his interest in a wide variety of musical styles, from the repetitive music of Steve Reich to the rock of Pink Floyd.

→ SNAKES AND LADDERS!

Here is a variation on the game of Snakes and Ladders.

You will need a die and some tokens. The goal of the game is to make your way through the course and get to the finish line. Each time you come to a ladder or a snake, you will have to answer a question: at a ladder, a correct answer allows you to climb, while a wrong answer leaves you where you are; at a snake, a correct answer keeps you safe, while a wrong answer makes you slide back down.

Arrivée 29 28 27 26

Bravo! Long live rhythm!

How many beats does a whole note equal?

21 22 23 24 25

Name 2 percussion instruments

What is this instrument?

20 19 18 17 16

How many seconds are there in a minute?

11 12 13 14 15

What is this instrument?

Keep going! We're counting on you!

10 9 8 7 6

How many toms are in a drum kit?

What am I?

Départ 2 3 4 5

How many beats are there in a waltz rhythm?

Good luck!

→ WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

Find 7 things that are different between the first and second illustrations.

Start searching: Rémi has a music lesson and must bring along **two maracas**, a **triangle**, and his **guiro**. Help him find his instruments in his messy room. If you aren't familiar with these instruments, do some research to find out what they look like and how they are used.



→ THE PROJECT: A MUSICAL RALLY RACE WITH YOUR FRIENDS!

Like our rhythm explorers, you too can show your parents and friends how big of a role rhythm and music play in our daily lives. You can choose to hold your rally at home, in a classroom at school, or outside. You'll see—by exploring and listening to the sounds around you—that rhythm is practically everywhere you look.

SETTING UP THE RALLY:

Steps:

- 1 Locate the rhythms and melodies
- 2 Create and write down the clues
- 3 Hide the clues along the course
- 4 Start the race

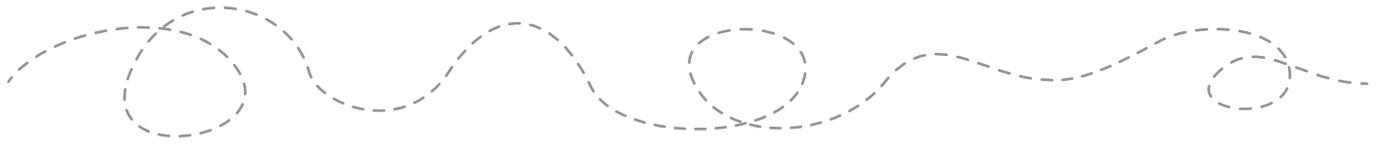
1

LOCATE THE RHYTHMS AND MELODIES

Go explore your home or classroom and listen carefully to the sounds you hear. Perhaps you'll hear the slow and steady rhythm of a clock or watch. In school, listen to the sound of the bell that rings at the end of the day. You can also ask a parent or teacher to help you find some rhythms and melodies.

Here's a little trick to help distinguish everyday noise from the rhythms and melodies that surround us... Clap your hands to help figure out if the sound you've found has a repeating rhythm. Or try to sing what you hear to see if you've found a nice little melody.

For older students: explore your yard or a nearby park. Close your eyes to help focus on the sounds you hear. You may be astonished to discover the slow and sometimes creaky rhythm of children playing on the swings, the sound of balls hitting the pavement, or a ball being bounced off a wall. You can also hear the interesting rhythms of the windshield wipers on the bus or in a car. Church bells also sometimes have interesting rhythms.



2 CREATE AND WRITE DOWN THE CLUES:

Once you've found and identified all the melodies and rhythms, you must help your friends find them by mapping out a course scattered with clues. You must write out these hints on little cards that will enable your friends to find all the sounds you have chosen. But remember, the clues must be both precise enough to allow your friends to get to the next stop in the rally but mysterious enough to make things fun!

Make your clue cards fun and colourful by decorating them with drawings or adding stickers.

Example of a clue:

If you want to include the sound of a clock as part of your course, you might use the following clue: "I might be round or I might be square. You can see me on a wall or on a desk, and I might have hands or numbers!"

3 HIDE THE CLUES ALONG THE COURSE

Now it's time to go hide those valuable clues!

4 START THE RACE: RULES OF THE GAME

The rally starts with an initial clue that you hand out to the participants. From then on, it's up to your friends or parents to find the clues you previously hid or stuck (using adhesive gum) close to your chosen objects. Don't forget, each clue must lead to the next one—you should therefore number your cards, hide them, and go through the course before your participants do to make sure that the clues are in the right order. Finally, one last clue marks the end of the rally. You can hide a little reward or a nice drawing with it!

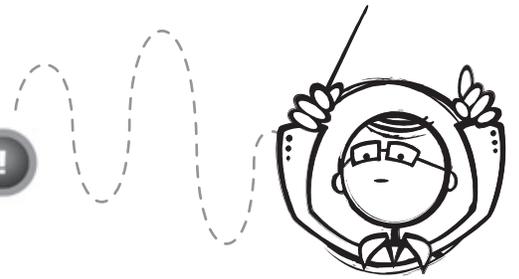
What if there are only two of us? No problem! The rally is a game that can be adapted to any situation. One person can write the clues and create the course, the other person then goes about finding the sounds and objects! If there are several players, why not put your friends into teams of 2 or 3?

The team or person that completes the rally in the best time is proclaimed the winner.

Important: If several teams are playing, make sure the participants put the clues back exactly where they were found. You can even accompany each team to make sure the rally goes off without a hitch!

**4, 3, 2, 1...
and they're off...
on a musical rally!**

TO YOUR INSTRUMENTS! READY? SET... PLAY!



→ AFRICAN 6/8

Bruno Roy

Cajon

5

9

13

TO YOUR INSTRUMENTS! READY? SET... PLAY!



→ TUTTI 4/4 ON TRASH CANS

Bruno Roy

4/4

3

5

7

9

11

13

15

6

GET READY FOR THE CONCERT



**YOU CAN KEEP THIS GUIDE AND REFER TO IT EVERY TIME
YOU GO TO AN OPERA OR CONCERT.**

It sets out various rules that you must follow before, during and after the concert, and information about applause, an ancient custom that has continued to this day.

Read the guide carefully to become an experienced concertgoer!

CLAP YOUR HANDS

To show your appreciation during a concert, you can clap your hands.

In a concert, it is customary to applaud the performers at the end of each piece. If the piece is in several movements, you should wait for the end of the last movement and leave a moment of silence, just as the musicians leave a moment of silence between movements.

At the opera, a different system applies. The audience often applauds the singers at the end of a well-known or difficult aria, as well as applauding at the end of each Act. At jazz concerts, the audience often applauds the players after each solo improvisation.



1

BEFORE THE CONCERT

To make sure you don't distract the artists and audience, turn off any electronic device (watch, pager, cell phone, etc.)

Make sure you don't arrive late for the concert. It is preferable to arrive 10 to 15 minutes before the concert is scheduled to begin. This will give you time to read the program!



2

DURING THE CONCERT

To show your respect for the musicians and the audience, don't talk to the people next to you. Silence is essential to allow the musicians, and everybody at the concert, to concentrate.

Candies and sweets should only be eaten outside the concert hall. They can make a lot of noise and disturb your neighbours if you unwrap them during the concert.

Unless there's an emergency, never leave the concert hall during the performance. If possible, wait for the intermission.

The musicians on the stage are aware of everything going on in the hall and hear all the sounds made by the members of the audience. By keeping a respectful silence, you will allow the performers to give the best concert possible.

3

AFTER THE CONCERT

Make sure you haven't forgotten anything on or under your seat. Leave the concert hall calmly, without pushing or shoving. Take the time to discuss the concert with your friends.

It is often possible to meet the performers after a concert to congratulate them or ask them questions. Sometimes, the musicians come back on stage to meet the audience members; if this is the case, you just have to go up to them and speak to them. If the musicians do not come back on stage, ask one of the ushers where to go to meet them backstage or in their dressing room.

EXPAND YOUR MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE



READING IN FRENCH

- BLADES, James et DEAN, John. *La batterie sans professeur*. Collection Musique sans professeur, Éditions de l'Homme, Montréal, 1990, 117 p.
- De MASSELOT Emmanuel, WOEHLING Philippe. *Percuti Percuta, petites percussions*. Volume 1, Fuzeau, Paris, 2004, 24 fiches, 1 feuillet pédagogique et 1 disque compact.
- TAVERNIER, Jean-Claude. *À propos... de la percussion*. Gérard Billaudot Éditeur, Paris, 1998, 565 p.

SOLUTIONS

Snakes and Ladders:

- **Box Number 5:**
How many beats are there in a waltz rhythm?
3 beats
- **Box Number 8:**
What am I?
An eighth note
- **Box Number 10:**
How many toms are in a drum kit?
2 to 4 toms
- **Box Number 11:**
What is this instrument?
The maracas
- **Box Number 20:**
How many seconds are there in a minute?
60 seconds
- **Box Number 24:**
Name 2 percussion instruments.
Maracas, the triangle, the snare drum, a drum kit, cymbals, the cajón, toms...
- **Box Number 25:**
What is this instrument?
A snare drum
- **Box Number 28:**
How many beats does a whole note equal?
4 beats

What's different?

